—for example, that the revolutionary tide was rising—he would draw a conclusion—that the party must have an aggressive plan of action. Then, after repeating this thought several times, he would move to the next conclusion—all with the appearance of absolute certainty that his statements were irrefutable and with derisive contempt for those who thought otherwise. His thesis was that the revolution was on a new upswing and the Duma would be a roadblock in its way. The workers would gain nothing in the new parliament. The party must therefore boycott the elections. Lenin's speech was followed by a lively discussion. All the speakers agreed with him.

The Mensheviks were envisaging another tactic: to take part in the first stage of the elections and boycott the final stage. In comparison, Lenin's tactic had the advantage of simplicity. The Minister of the Interior, Durnovo, an old bureaucrat notorious for his arrogance, added vigor to Lenin's argument by sending out secret instructions to rural police chiefs and ordering them to control elections by "using armed force if necessary" but "without creating bad feelings in the population." After these instructions had leaked to the newspapers, Durnovo explained that he intended to use armed force solely to protect the patriotic majority of the people against the intimidation by a criminal minority. "The government is confident," he announced, "that measures of coercion employed to this effect will be greeted with gratitude by all true Russian men and women." Simultaneously, a new decree was published that penalized advocacy of the boycott with a prison term. Now the Bolsheviks could ask the voters: "Are you for the boycott and against Durnovo or for Durnovo and against the boycott?"

In the students' mess, a few days after the publication of the decree, Anton handed me an invitation to a pre-electoral meeting arranged by the Cadets. The invitation had been addressed to the St. Petersburg Committee of the S-D party, and the latter designated me to speak in its name. I felt unprepared but said I would go.

A galaxy of substantial citizens occupied the front row, and a brilliant panel of liberal leaders adorned the long table on the dais. A police officer sitting at a separate desk added a note of respectability to the scene. The keynote speech was delivered by a venerable, gray-haired professor, Miliukov. After enumerating the government's crimes—abuse of power, ruthless cruelty in suppressing unrest, pogroms and the like—he concluded, "The Duma is called upon to put an end to this disgrace. Vote for the Constitutional Democratic party!" Then he challenged those who disagreed with him to speak up.

I was the first to ask for the floor. I began by saying that I accepted the speaker's appraisal of the existing regime but doubted his